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BOOK REVIEWS

Edited by Lester B. Shippee

Since the civil war. By Charles Ramsdell Lingley. (New York: The Century company, 1920. 635 p. \$2.65)

The difficulties attending the presentation in an orderly and logical form of the facts of recent American history are well known to anyone who has attempted to give a course to a group of college or university students. Even more embarrassed is the individual who tries to condense into the limits of a single volume the multifarious events which have taken place within the past half century. Those who believe that a work, particularly when intended to be used as a textbook, should be something more than a chronicle, a series of annals, can sympathize with Professor Lingley's perplexities in struggling with the mass of materials available for use, yet so far little digested, which make up the sources of contemporary history. Time has not sifted the relevant from the irrelevant, the truly important from the ephemeral. No working and reworking has weeded the field to leave the fruitful plants and eliminate the hampering but rank growths which sometimes hide the real crop from the casual eye. Nevertheless, there must come the pioneers who subdue the soil before later tillers can garner abundant harvests. Professor Lingley is one of the pioneers, and what he has done will make somewhat easier the task of those who follow. To criticize, then, is not to condemn the work of the earlier toiler, but to point out untouched places, to call attention to oversights or what appear to be such in order that others who follow may profit.

In the first place, the outstanding lack in this book would seem to lie in the absence of any distinct unifying motive or line of thought which runs through and colors the lasting factors in the history of the American people since the civil war. There is no slavery issue, nor is there much left of the equally important factor of the frontier, tied as that was with the existence of a vast public domain to be occupied and brought under the control of man. Nevertheless, as time goes on, there does appear to be emerging a dominant theme which persists through the past fifty years, and this theme is the economic or industrial revolution and its modifying influences on the development of the United States. At times this fact seems to be recognized in the work under consideration, but only fleetingly, for it ever and anon becomes merged with a mass of detail strung together in more or less chronological order. That the full effect of the industrial revolution — or “secondary” revolution, as the

economists sometimes choose to call it — was interwoven with the disappearance of the frontier is coming to be realized more and more by students of later history. One does not, however, feel that Professor Lingley felt its full force.

Notably is this the case in the treatment of the whole agrarian movement which, after the war, manifested itself in the antimonopoly agitation and persisted through the granger movement, the alliance movement and populism, and appeared still later in the nonpartisan revolt. Not only does the book give inadequate consideration to the alliances, but it fails sufficiently to show how they ripened into populism, or to bring out how significant the later movement was in molding American development. Furthermore, the part which it played in the south both as a local and a national force is practically ignored. While speaking of this matter the question might well be raised as to why the participation of the populists in the election of 1908 is mentioned when the struggle within the party in 1896 and the wide open split with the resulting middle-of-the-road faction of 1900 pass without comment.

Another theme, the treatment of which may be questioned, is that of foreign relations beginning in the nineties. The Spanish-American war, aside from the interest of Americans in Cuba, calls for at least a reference to the distinctly truculent attitude on the part of a vocal portion of the American people which existed all through the second administration of Cleveland, which responded to the call in Olney's Venezuela note, and which sated itself in the battle of San Juan hill and the destruction of Cervera's fleet. Furthermore, there seems to be no slight connection between a growing interest in international affairs and the development of an industrial America which was perforce turning from agriculture as the predominant economic fact to manufacturing, the integration of industry, large-scale organization, and the concomitant necessity of ever-broadening markets and sources of supply. The acquisition of a canal site, the greater concern about what occurred in the West Indies and in central and northern South America, on the one hand, and the retention of the Philippines, the open door, and a changing attitude toward Japan, on the other are not isolated events but were vitally connected with what was going on and with what had already occurred within the United States. This is hinted at in some places in Professor Lingley's book, but it is much to be doubted whether the fact would be grasped by the ordinary student or by a casual reader without further explanation and interpretation.

Again, it is a commonly accepted fact that the prevalence of labor agitation which has been particularly noticeable since about 1877 is but the reverse of the picture of big business. To a degree this fact is recognized. Nevertheless when one comes across such a statement as this:

“Although a radical, socialistic element broke away [*from regularly organized labor*] in 1905 and formed the Industrial Workers of the World, yet the defection was not immediately serious and in general schisms have been avoided,” and then seeks in vain for further reference to the I. W. W. and what that whole movement signifies, one wonders if one’s own perspective has been completely distorted.

In general it may be said that the portion of the book dealing with the period before about 1896 is much more satisfactory than that which follows, for in the earlier portion the sense of disjointed enumeration of a multiplicity of facts is much less pronounced than in the later.

But after all is said and specific criticisms have been made to a much greater length than above, it remains to be stated that this is the most satisfactory (or least unsatisfactory) of the several works which have so far been produced to cover the period of the past half century. Each chapter has a bibliographical note which contains many useful references, although there might be suggested additions which would allow a somewhat broader interpretation. The index is fair but exasperating at times.

Alexander Hamilton. By Henry Jones Ford. Figures from American history. (New York: Charles Scribner’s sons, 1920. 373 p. \$2.00)

Hamilton’s life was so largely made up of political strife that his earlier biographers fell quite naturally into the error of assuming that full justice could be done to his reputation only by blackening indiscriminately the characters of all his political enemies. Professor Ford’s little book is highly valuable because he wrote it without a chip on his shoulder, because he has given the reader the fruits of accurate historical research in his examination of the facts of Hamilton’s life, and because he has interpreted those facts with a breadth and wisdom well calculated to lead to a clearer appreciation of the true measure of Hamilton’s statesmanship.

New light is thrown upon Hamilton’s relations with the other great men of his time. Professor Ford shows, for instance, that during the convention of 1787 there was no substantial difference between the political views of Hamilton and those of Madison. The English constitutional system was the model for each. But much stress is laid upon the later desertion of Madison and the disastrous results of it. The original plan of the federalist leaders was to establish an intimacy between congress and the executive branch through the channel of the treasury department. Madison’s influence was responsible for denying Hamilton, as secretary of the treasury, the right to defend his financial proposals in congress and thus was set the precedent for the wide gap between executive and legislative power which constitutes so serious a defect in